



# NEWS

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## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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### **INTERIOR SECRETARY AND TRIBES GATHER AT HOOPA RESERVATION TO RELEASE TRINITY RIVER FISHERY RESTORATION PLAN**

Today, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt released the Department's plan to restore fisheries to the mainstem of the Trinity River. Development of a river restoration proposal for naturally producing fish is mandated by, among other things, a 1981 Secretarial Decision and federal law (including the 1955 Act authorizing construction and operation of the Trinity Division), the 1984 Trinity River Restoration Act (mandating restoration to pre-dam levels) and 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act, Section 3406(b)(23) (mandating completion of the Trinity River Flow Evaluation Study and implementation of permanent flows in the Trinity River with the concurrence of the Hoopa Valley Tribe).

"This decision is 20 years in the making," said Secretary Babbitt. "It reflects our commitment and obligation to protect both fish and wildlife species, and to fulfill our trust responsibilities to the tribes living in the region who have fished on the Trinity River for thousands of years. This decision also allows for 52% of the water from the Trinity to be exported to the Central Valley for water use and power generation."

The official Decision provides a well-balanced approach to Trinity River mainstem restoration. The proposal includes:

- A new instream flow regime that provides for flow volume releases according to hydrologic year type which still allows for over half of the water (52%) from the Trinity River basin to be exported to the Central Valley for water use and power generation.
- Mechanical channel rehabilitation of 47 sites (all available readily accessible sites with no continued maintenance)
- Coarse and fine sediment management and gravel placement
- Bridge replacement and infrastructure modification
- Watershed restoration
- Adaptive management

"The decision by Interior Secretary Babbitt to sign the Record of Decision for returning flows to the Trinity River is of monumental importance to the Hoopa People in the sustenance of our resources and culture. Many people from both sides of the aisle and many different agencies can now stand without hesitation to accept the responsibility that goes along with this decision and the gratitude of the Hoopa People, " said the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council Chairman, Duane J. Sherman Sr.

In 1955, Congress authorized the construction and operation of a dam and other facilities on the Trinity River in northern California as part of the Central Valley Project. As a result, an average of 70% of Trinity Basin water is exported over the mountains, to the Sacramento River and the Central Valley of California. Over time, although unintended, these exports have had serious, negative impacts on the river and on the fisheries that depend upon the river (chinook have decreased 67%, coho 93% and steelhead have decreased 53%). Coho that utilize the Trinity River are currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In addition, the interests (and in particular, the reserved fishing interest) of the Hoopa Valley Tribe whose reservation borders the Trinity River, and the Yurok Tribe whose reservation borders the Klamath river downstream from its confluence with the Trinity, have been affected.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) contains an extensive analysis of certain power issues and potential impacts or benefits as a result of each of the alternatives analyzed in the FEIS. The Trinity River Diversion accounts for about 25% of the CVP installed capacity, which is about 1 % of current California demand and less than 1% projected 2010 demand. The change in capacity attributable to the Preferred Alternative is less than four-tenths of one percent.

In terms of water use issues, the FEIS found that implementation of the Preferred Alternative could result in decreases in CVP deliveries and Delta exports by 2% in average years and 4% in dry years. However, the Trinity River Preferred Alternative was taken into consideration in the CALFED process. Thus, the CALFED ROD water delivery goals for south-of-Delta agricultural interests of 65% of total contract amounts will not be affected by implementation of the Trinity River Preferred Alternative.

"The decision by Secretary Babbitt is a necessary and good start to restoring fish populations to the Trinity River and upholding the Federal Government's trust obligation to the Tribe. Yurok traditions and culture depend upon healthy fish populations in the Klamath/Trinity Basins. This is a start. The Yurok Tribe looks forward to working with all parties to make the goals of the Record of Decision reality," said Yurok Tribe Chairperson Susan Masten.

Copies of the final report can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ccfwo.r1.fws.gov>

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